

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 014727

NODIS
FOR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM TOKYO DATED JANUARY 19, 1978
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

S E C R E T TOKYO 0935

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: TSPA, JA
SUBJECT: RE-ENTRY OF SOVIET SATELLITE, COSMOS 954

REF: STATE 13681

1. CHARGE, ACCOMPANIED BY SCICOUNS, CALLED ON VICE FOREIGN
MIN ISTERARITA (IN ABSENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER) AT EARLIEST
POSSIBLE TIME TO DELIVER CONTENTS OF REFTEL. K. WATANABE,
DIRECTOR OF MOFA FIRST NORTH AMERICA DIVISION, WAS ALSO
PRESENT. CHARGE EXPLAINED SITUATION STRESSING THAT DISSEMINATION
OF INFORMATION MUST BE LIMITED TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM NUMBER
OF PEOPLE.

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2. ARITA APPEARED TO BE CONCERNED TO LEARN OF IMPENDING
RE-ENTRY OF REACTOR. HE AND WATANABE EMPHASIZED NUCLEAR
SENSITIVITIES OF JAPANESE AND POLITICAL VULNERABILITY OF GOJ IF
RE-ENTRY WERE TO OCCUR OVER JAPANESE TERRITORY AND PUBLIC
LEARNS THAT GOVERNMENT WAS AWARE OF INCIDENT IN ADVANCE BUT
TOOK NO OVERT STEPS TO "PROTECT" CITIZENRY. THEY

AGREED, HOWEVER, TO MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION.

3. AT FIRST GOJ OFFICIALS WERE CONCERNED THAT U.S. MIGHT BE INFORMING JAPAN BECAUSE LATTER WAS SUBJECT TO SPECIAL HAZARD. THEY WERE ASSURED REPEATEDLY THAT POINT OF RE-ENTRY WAS ESSENTIALLY RANDOM, AND THAT U.S. EXPERTS BELIEVED THERE WAS PROBABILITY THAT REACTOR WOULD BE BURNED UP IN UPPER ATMOSPHERE WITH NO FRAGMENTS IMPACTING ON LAND SURFACES.

4. FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFO RAISED BY GOJ OFFICIALS FOR WHICH WE REQUEST NIACT IMMEDIATE RESPONSE IF POSSIBLE:

A. WHAT IS BEST ESTIMATE OF DATE AND TIME OF CONTACT OF SATELLITE WITH UPPER ATMOSPHERE (I.E., WHEN RE-ENTRY HEATING AND BURN-UP BEGINS)? PLEASE SPECIFY TIME ZONE USED, E.G., GMT.

B. CAN USG FURNISH MORE DETAILED ESTIMATE OF MAXIMUM CREDIBLE SEVERITY, BOTH RADIOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL, IF GROUND IMPACT OCCURS?

C. IS MULTIPLE IMPACT A POSSIBILITY?

D. WHEN WAS COSMOS 954 LAUNCHED?

E. IS USSR AWARE THAT GOJ AND OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN INFORMED? (CHARGE HAD ADVISED ARITA THAT NATO COUNTRIES, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND JAPAN--AS MAJOR SECRET

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U.S. ALLIES--WERE ONLY COUNTRIES NOTIFIED.

F. DOES SOVIETS' INTENTION TO "ACT IN CONFORMITY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW" INCLUDE MAKING PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMPENDING RE-ENTRY OR WILL THEY DO SO AFTER EVENT?

G. GOJ REQUESTS AS MUCH LEAD TIME AS POSSIBLE IN BEING KEPT INFORMED OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

5. ARITA ASKED CHARGE TO CONVEY HIS AND GOJ'S APPRECIATION TO USG FOR HAVING ALERTED GOJ TO THIS IMPORTANT MATTER. SHERMAN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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